

Santa came early for several members of Congress: House leaders on Thursday announced committee assignments for both veterans and newcomers.

Republican Congressman Gary Miller will now be the number two Republican on the House Financial Services Committee. Miller, who just won reelection in a new district in Riverside, has served on that committee for more than a decade and has been active on housing and mortgage issues.

Irvine Congressman John Campbell also serves on Financial Services and has landed the top spot on the Domestic and International Monetary Policy Subcommittee.

On the Democratic side, a trio of California Congresswomen are taking on new committees. L.A.'s Karen Bass adds the Judiciary Committee to her "things to do" list. Oakland Congresswoman Barbara Lee, who's served for a decade and a half in Washington, will now serve on the House Budget Committee.

Carson Congresswoman Janice Hahn, who was elected less than two years ago, gets an assignment she's wanted from the start: Transportation and Infrastructure. Hahn says she's particularly interested in projects related to the ports, high speed rail, and modernizing airports. Hahn says: "What we need now is a belief that the people of California and the country want us to make the investments that create construction jobs today and revitalize our competitiveness for the future."

California's newly-elected Democratic freshmen also discovered which committees they've landed. Gloria Negrete McLeod of Chino will serve on the Agriculture Committee, and Scott Peters of San Diego is on Armed Services.

Three Democratic freshmen from California will serve on the House Foreign Affairs Committee: Ami Bera from Sacramento, Alan Lowenthal from Long Beach, and Juan Vargas from El Centro.

Another trio of Democrats from California is joining the Natural Resources Committee: L.A.'s Tony Cardenas, Palm Springs' Raul Ruiz, and San Rafael's Jared Huffman. The Science, Space, and Technology Committee will welcome Eric Swalwell of

Livermore. And both Julia Brownley of Ventura and Mark Takano of Riverside will serve on Veterans Affairs.

In making the announcement, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi called her Democratic Caucus "the most diverse in the history of Congress, and each of our Members will bring a unique perspective to the great challenges of our day."

Committee assignments for California's trio of Republican freshmen — Paul Cook of Barstow, Doug LaMalfa of Redding, David Valadao of Hanford — are expected to be announced soon.